



National Park Service  
U.S. Department of the Interior

Wind Cave National Park

RR 1, Box 190  
Hot Springs SD 57747

605-745-4600 phone  
605-745-4207 fax

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## Wind Cave National Park News Release

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Tom Farrell 605-745-4600

tom\_farrell@nps.gov

### Boundary Expansion Decision for Wind Cave National Park Announced


Preserving an important component of the natural scenic landscape, increasing recreational opportunities, protecting known cultural resources, and facilitating fire management in the “keyhole” region of the park were the determining factors in a decision to expand Wind Cave National Park by 5,675 acres along its southern boundary according to an announcement made today by William W. Schenk, Midwest Regional Director for the National Park Service.

Schenk issued his decision in a Finding of No Significant Impact (FONSI) following an extended 60-day public comment period on an environmental assessment regarding the Park’s expansion. This environmental assessment was prompted by an offer from the Casey family in October of 2000 to sell their ranchland adjacent to the park.

“This land is a natural extension of the canyon and ridge topography currently in the park, and it increases the National Park Service’s ability to protect significant values such as natural vistas, wildlife habitat, and ancient cultural sites. The plan also provides an opportunity to expand the research area for Chronic Wasting Disease, a study the Park will be leading in conjunction with South Dakota Game Fish and Parks,” Schenk said.

The alternative chosen, a modified version of alternative B from the group of alternatives proposed in the environmental assessment, includes 5,555 acres of Casey property, 80 acres of Bureau of Land Management (BLM) land, and 40 acres of private land currently for sale. This new preferred alternative excludes 880 acres of South Dakota Public School Land from the proposal as a result of comments received regarding the plan’s impact on the area’s tax base. The exclusion of these lands will reduce that impact as well as permit local hunters continued access.

“Wind Cave National Park strives to be a good neighbor,” said park Superintendent Linda L. Stoll. “We heard the people who expressed concern about the proposal and believe the modified version is a reasonable compromise. The plan, as it stands, still protects the park from visual intrusions and development around its core areas, leaving intact the sense of wonder found when visiting or hiking in our backcountry.”



Nearly 1,200 responses were received during the 60-day comment period with the overwhelming majority in favor of the expansion. The FONSI and the final environmental assessment are available on the Park's website at [www.nps.gov/wica/](http://www.nps.gov/wica/) or at the Hot Springs, Custer, and Rapid City Libraries after July 5.

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